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TELEGRAM INFORMATION REPORT TELEGRAM

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

S. Vietnam

SECRET (When Filled In) — CLASSIFICATION — DISSEMINATION CONTROLS — NO FOREIGN DISSEM

COUNTRY	VIETNAM	REPORT NO.	TDCS-3/547,646
SUBJECT	APPREHENSIONS OF VIETNAMESE CONSUL GENERAL IN SINGAPORE REGARDING RECENT EVENTS IN VIETNAM	DATE DISTR.	18 MAY 1963
		PRECEDENCE	ROUTINE
DATE OF INFO.	17 MAY 1963	REFERENCES	IN 41548
PLACE & DATE ACQ.	SINGAPORE (17 MAY 1963)		
APPRAISAL	SEE BELOW	FIELD REPORT NO.	FSS 12881

THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION. SOURCE GRADINGS ARE DEFINITIVE. APPRAISAL OF CONTENT IS TENTATIVE.

SOURCE AN AMERICAN OBSERVER (B) FROM VIETNAMESE CONSUL GENERAL TRAN KIM PHUONG.

APPR: CONSUL GENERAL PHUONG HAS BEEN AN ARDENT AND DEVOTED SUPPORTER OF THE PRESIDENTAND OF NGO DINH NHU'S CAN LAO PARTY. HE IS A CATHOLIC AND A FRIEND AND SUPPORTER OF DR. TUYEN. THIS REPORT IS BELIEVED TO REFLECT ACCURATELY HIS VIEWS WHICH ARE FELT TO BE REASONABLY OBJECTIVE AS WELL AS SINCERE.

1. SUMMARY. VIETNAMESE CONSUL GENERAL TRAN KIM PHUONG CONSIDERS THAT THE COMBINATION OF THREE UNWISE POLITICAL ACTS IN THE PAST MONTH MAY ULTIMATELY PROVE FATAL TO THE REGIME OF PRESIDENT NGU DINH DIEM DESPITE ITS GAINS IN THE MILITARY STRUGGLE AGAINST THE VIET COMMUNISTS (VC). THESE THREE ACTS WERE: DISMISSAL OF HUYNH VAN LANG OF THE OFFICE OF EXCHANGES FROM HIS POSITION OF POWER IN THE SOUTHERN FACTION OF THE CAN LAO (REVOLUTIONARY WORKER'S) PARTY; THE DENIGRATION AND REMOVAL FROM POWER AND AUTHORITY OF DR. TRAN KIM TUYEN, DIRECTOR OF SEPES:; AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, THE HUE INCIDENT ON BUDDHA'S BIRTHDAY 8 MAY IN WHICH BUDDHIST PARADERS

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GROUP 1 Excluded from automatic downgrading and declassification

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WERE KILLED BY THE CIVIL GUARD. EACH OF THESE SEPARATE ACTS HAS SERVED TO WEAKEN THE MOTIVATION OF DIFFERENT SEGMENTS OF VIETNAMESE AND TO FURTHER NARROW , POSSIBLY TO A FATAL DEGREE, THE BASE OF SUPPORT FOR THE REGIME.

2. CONSUL GENERAL PHUONG FEARED THAT TUYEN'S DISMISSAL IN PARTICULAR WOULD CAUSE CONSIDERABLE INSECURITY AMONG LOYAL SUPPORTERS AND PUBLIC SERVANTS OF THE REGIME WHO KNOW DR. TUYEN'S RECORD OF LOYAL SERVICE TO THE PRESIDENT AND ESPECIALLY TO HIS BROTHER, PRESIDENTIAL COUNSELOR NGO DINH NHU. THESE OFFICIALS CAN CERTAINLY QUESTION WHETHER ANYONE'S POSITION IN THE REGIME IS SAFE IF TUYEN COULD FALL FROM FAVOR. PHUONG STATED THAT SEVERAL FRIENDS OF HIS WITH LONG RECORDS OF SERVICE TO THE GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM (GVN) AND TO THE PRESIDENTIAL FAMILY HAVE ALREADY WRITTEN TO HIM DESPONDENTLY ALONG THESE LINES. TUYEN HAD A BAD REPUTATION WITH MANY OFFICERS IN THE VIETNAMESE ARMY AND BUREAUCRACY AS THE HATCHETMAN AND TROUBLESHOOTER FOR NGO DINH NHU BUT NO ONE DOUBTED HIS DEVOTION TO NHU. YET NHU HAS STRIPPED HIM OF ALL REAL AUTHORITY SUPPOSEDLY BECAUSE OF A SILLY WOMEN'S TIFF BETWEEN MADAME NHU AND MADAME TUYEN. ANY OBJECTIVE GVN OFFICIAL MIGHT QUESTION THE FRIVOLITY, INGRATITUDE AND LACK OF PERSPECTIVE OF A REGIME THAT ACTS THUS.

3. FURTHERMORE TUYEN WAS ONE OF THE FEW REMAINING GVN OFFICIALS IN HIGH POSITION RESPECTED BY OPPOSITION LEADERS AND VIETNAMESE

INTELLECTUALS PARTICULARLY THOSE FROM NORTH VIETNAM. THOSE WHO DID NOT LIKE HIM AT LEAST TRUSTED HIS FAIRNESS AND BASIC EMPATHY WHEREAS THEY NEITHER TRUSTED NOR LIKED NHU EVEN THOUGH NHU HIMSELF WAS AN INTELLECTUAL.

4. WITHIN THE CAN LAO PARTY, WHICH IS STILL ONE OF THE SECRET MAINSPRINGS OF SUPPORT IN VIETNAM FOR THE PRESIDENT AND THE NGO FAMILY, THE PARALLEL REMOVAL FROM AUTHORITY OF HUYNH VAN LANG HAS OCCASIONED SIMILAR DOUBTS AMONG THE PARTY'S RANK -AND-FILE. AS IN TUYEN'S CASE, CAN LAO MEMBERS CAN QUESTION WHAT VALUE IS LOYALTY AND SERVICE IF A MAN LIKE LANG CAN LOSE HIS POST.

5. THE EVEN MORE SERIOUS MISTAKE WHICH MAY NARROW THE BASE OF SUPPORT FOR THE GVN TO A FATAL DEGREE WAS THE SHOOTING OF BUDDHIST PARADERS AT HUE ON THE OCCASION OF BUDDHA'S BIRTHDAY. THE HUE REGIME OF CENTRAL VIETNAM COUNSELOR NGO DINH CAN HAS ALWAYS OPERATED LIKE AN AUTONOMOUS POLICE STATE AND HAS BEEN NOTORIOUS FOR ITS FAVORITISM TOWARD CATHOLICS, BELYING PRESIDENT DIEM'S EARLIER REPUTATION FOR RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE. MANY VIETNAMESE CATHOLICS FEAR THAT THE GVN'S INCREASING PRO-CATHOLIC BENT WILL BE HARMFUL TO THE CHURCH AS WELL AS TO THE REGIME. CERTAINLY THE STUPID SUPPRESSION OF BUDDHIST RELIGIOUS FLAGS AT HUE ON 8 MAY (ON PRETEXT THAT THEY MIGHT BE CONSTRUED AS CONNECTED TO VC COMMEMORATION OF THE DIEN BIEN PHU VICTORY)
AND CONSEQUENT FATALITIES WILL AROUSE THE ANTAGONISM OF PREDOMINANTLY

BUDDHIST VIETNAM AGAINST BOTH THE REGIME AND THE CATHOLICS.

6. FROM REPORTS REACHING HIM PHUONG FOUND IT PARTICULARLY SIGNIFICANT THAT WHEN CENTRAL VIETNAM AUTHORITIES ORDERED POLICE TO EXECUTE THE DIRECTIVE BANNING FLAGS, INITIALY THE POLICE MERELY RESTATED THE ORDER BUT WOULD NOT RIP DOWN ANY BUDDHIST FLAGS. FINALLY SEVERAL CATHOLIC POLICE DID SO, BUT SOME BUDDHIST POLICE-MEN REFUSED, SAYING THAT BUDDHIST FLAGS SHOULD BE PERMITTED JUST AS CATHOLIC FLAGS ARE FLOWN ON SAINTS DAYS. SUCH DEFIANCE OF ORDERS AT HUE IS QUITE RARE, PHUONG SAID.

7. THE CROWNING INSULT TO BUDDHISTS WHICH WILL FURTHER ENFLAME THEM AND ALSO REVIVE THE OUTCRY AGAINST NGO FAMILY RULE WAS THE NEWS OF HUE ARCHBISHOP NGO DINH THUC'S PLAN THAT THE PRESIDENT ASK BUDDHIST ASSOCIATIONS ELSEWHERE IN VIETNAM TO CONDEMN THE CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE AND DISORDER OF THE HUE BUDDHISTS. ARCHBISHOP THUC REPORTEDLY WENT TO SAIGON TO DEMAND THIS. THE VC COULD NOT HAVE A BETTER PROPAGANDA WEAPON IF THEY HAD LAUNCHED THE IN-CIDENT AND DIRECTED THUC'S REACTION THEMSELVES.

8. BY SUCH ACTS THE REGIME IS DESTROYING CONFIDENCE AND LOYAL MOTIVATION OF PUBLIC SERVANTS, INTELLECTUALS, PARTY SUPPORTERS, AND THE MASS OF NON-CATHOLIC PEASANTRY IN ITS MOST CRUCIAL TIME. IF THIS CONTINUES ONLY SYCOPHANTS AND XENOPHOBES WILL PREDOMINATE IN THE GVN AND ITS RELATIONS WITH ITS PEOPLE, BUREAU-

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CRACY, ARMY AND FRIENDLY ALLIES WILL DETERIORATE IN A WELTER OF PETTY JEALOUSIES, FEUDS, AND PREJUDICES.

9. FIELD DISSEM: STATE (CONGEN ONLY) CINCPAC PACAF PACFLT ARPAC.

END OF MESSAGE